THE RULE OF LAW ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Stephen Soldz

Columbia Center for Oral History

Columbia University

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PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Stephen Soldz conducted by Mary Marshall Clark on May 24, 2012 and April 30, 2013. This interview is part of the Rule of Law Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

VJD

Session One

Interviewee: Stephen Soldz

Location: Brookline, MA

Interviewer: Mary Marshall Clark

Date: May 24, 2012

Q: Today is May 24, 2012. This is Mary Marshall Clark. I'm conducting the first session of an interview with Dr. Stephen Soldz in his office in Boston.

Soldz: Brookline.

Q: Brookline. I've learned all about Boston today, that it's all these neighborhoods combined.

Soldz: This is not part of Boston, though. Brookline is a separate city. We're a mile and a half from Boston.

Q: I'll have to correct my friend.

I'm so grateful for your time because you have done such an amazing job of helping the world learn about what's been going on within the APA [American Psychological Association], at Guantánamo, and other sites around the world. But as we always start, I'd like to start with you today by asking you about where you grew up, something about your early life, and your education.

Soldz: Where I grew up. I was born in St. Louis. We lived there for four years. Then my father got into graduate school at Harvard in philosophy and we moved up to the Boston area. We were

here for four years in three different places. Then, after four years, he had failed his preliminary exams three times and my mother said, "Enough," at which point my uncle got him a job with the federal government and NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration], so we went down to [Washington] D.C. and lived in northern Virginia until I was fifteen. I was a math prodigy and I went to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] in 1968, and dropped out almost immediately.

Q: Tell me about that. Does it have to do with 1968?

Soldz: Yes. Well, one, I had sort of decided by that point that I was brilliant at understanding mathematics. I was not really that creative. In retrospect, I think I was ill-served. It was the height of the cult of pure mathematics at the time. In pure mathematics it is sort of like either you're Nobel Prize-quality—well, there's no Nobel Prize in mathematics—or you're nobody. That sort of snot-status was there. So I didn't feel like I was real quality, plus I was suffering from depression at the time. The other thing was that when I went to MIT, I had two goals. One was to find a radical group to join and the other was to hear Noam Chomsky speak. As I say, I accomplished both the first week [laughs] so I didn't attend many classes.

Q: I so sympathize with that. As I said, my son went to Drew for seven weeks. The wrong environment.

Soldz: So I made it through the year. I failed a couple classes, including intro psychology. What I found very interesting is that when I applied to graduate school, no one ever asked me about my

record at that point. In between, I'd gotten a master's [degree] in counseling and been in the field, and was in psychoanalytic training already. But I just found it flabbergasting that no one even asked me why I failed psychology. [Laughs]

Q: Tell me a little bit more about what was going on with you at that time. You mentioned that you had depression—how you moved into counseling psychology and what your path was after that.

Soldz: I actually was in history, interested in social theory—radical social history. There was this alternative school, Cambridge-Goddard Graduate School for Social Change, that gave master's degrees. I was one of the faculty one year when I was nineteen or so. After I was a college dropout, I managed to get a master's degree. This was in the early seventies.

Q: Tell me more about that school. How long did you have to go to get a master's?

Soldz: I didn't get a master's. I gave a master's degree. I was faculty in libertarian socialism and the workers' movement. Those were unusual times. Eventually, after that, my path became more normal. I enrolled in a University Without Walls program out of UMass [University of Massachusetts] Amherst, which had the advantage that I never had to go to Amherst. I was just in Amherst twice—once to be interviewed and once to register. I managed to do all the courses through independent study. Herb [Herbert] Gintis was a radical economist who lived in Cambridge and went up to Amherst for three days a week. Every semester I did six credits of independent study of economics with him, studying social theory and various things. He was

very helpful, and also kept me from some of my worst tendencies. When I gave him a paper where I was aping a continental writing style, he chewed me out. I never forgot it, but I never did that again. Herb was sort of a no-nonsense empiricist, which is my natural tendency, so it was very good to have somebody to keep from that style of trying to sound like you know something by writing impenetrable sentences. [Laughs]

Q: Well, you're writing is completely the opposite. It's so clear.

Soldz: Some of my grad students who tend toward a post-modern lifestyle probably wish I hadn't learned that lesson. I always tell them, "The minimum criterion, if you want to cite the French psychoanalyst Jacques [-Marie-Émile] Lacan,"—who is one of the impenetrable people. I say, "If you want to cite Lacan, I have several conditions. One, you actually have to read Lacan. You can't just read what some English translator says Lacan says. Two, you have to write it in a language that I am capable of understanding. If you use lots of untranslatable French words, I won't understand it." So most students decide not to write about Lacan in that case.

Anyway. So my undergraduate degree was in social theory. You could just make up a title because it was a University Without Walls program. I was trying to decide what to do—to decide between history and psychology. The people I knew who went into history weren't getting jobs. At that point I couldn't drive because of my poor eyesight. That's changed since then. I would say, "I didn't have the qualifications to be a historian because every historian I knew was a taxi driver." [Laughter] I think I heard that there was something like two or three jobs for historians one year. I thought, "Oh, God, no. I can't do it." So I decided to go into psychology. I told my

therapist that it was because I thought I could get a job in psychology. She burst out laughing at the idea that you could get a job in psychology. She actually reappeared in this story in a slightly odd way years later. Maybe we'll get to that.

Q: Sure.

Soldz: I then started being more normal. Well, actually, not completely. I finished my bachelor's degree in January. I was waiting for fall to start a counseling program. I applied to BU's [Boston University] clinical psych program, for which I was turned down at that point. Then I applied to counseling psych at Wesley [College], so I got into that. I don't think I quite realized that it was the second year of the program. So I had a semester in between. In those days, we had something called Boston State College. It doesn't exist anymore. It's merged into UMass. I decided to take a couple of courses there because they were cheap and I wanted to get some graduate credit out of the way. So I took one, Psychopathology, and the other was Psychopathology: Psychoanalytic Model, which, unbeknownst to me, was taught by people of what was becoming the school. At that point it was the Boston Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies, which became the Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis. So that was my introduction to this school. They were all talking about "the Center," and I remember asking, "What is this Center you're talking about?" In modern psychoanalytic style, someone said, "Well, what do you think it is?"

Q: The historian side of you was cringing.

Soldz: Which led to an eruption. [Laughs] Anyway, I started enrolling here. I was in psychoanalytic training at the same time I was in my master's program. When I got out, it took many months to get a job. There was a budget freeze at the state level in Massachusetts, which meant that almost all the jobs were state-funded. Eventually, I got a job in a drug abuse clinic in Roslindale, working with teens and young adults twelve to twenty-five—drug addicts—which I was terrified to do but ended up loving. I did that for three and a half years or so, then went back. This time BU let me into their clinical program, and that's where I got my doctorate.

Q: What kind of psychoanalytic training were you taking?

Soldz: Well, the school had a particular school they called Modern Psychoanalysis, based on the ideas that psychoanalysis has—still, at this school—a cult stage, unfortunately, so every group has its charismatic leader. The theoretical charismatic leader was this guy Hyman Spotnitz, and the founder of the school was the charismatic leader Phyllis [W.] Meadow. One of the things about it was that the teaching—especially in those days but still true—was what we called process teaching. It was very much examining the process in the classroom rather than just the traditional discussion of ideas. That was very unusual, very addictive, and also quite irritating. I'm not the orthodox type for anything, so those of us who didn't buy all the ideas had a bit of a hard time. The negative side of the place is that people like us would have a hard time. But the strength is that you were still accepted, unlike other places. As long as you stuck it out and stuck to your guns. There aren't many places that have both of those and can actually, in the end, tolerate or even respect you for not buying into it, even though they find it irritating that you don't. In the end, it was good enough for me, sort of.

Q: How did your own thinking around practice and theory develop from that time?

Soldz: Well, I think the other factor, coming from a scientific background, is that I have a research orientation and I'm a skeptic by nature. The two go together. I became more involved in psychotherapy and related areas of research. I gradually moved to a lesser interest in the grand theories. I was more concerned with, say, the parts of psychoanalytic thinking that overlap, which don't depend on the more arcane forms of reasoning, and have some form of evidence other than or beyond "I once had a patient who—," which is a form of reasoning that drives me kind of crazy.

So I think I'm much more pragmatic, in a way. There are certain ideas in modern psychoanalysis that I think are very valuable and interesting that are put in a theoretical framework, which I think is a bit of nonsense. Unfortunately, most psychoanalytic schools have a bit of nonsense in their framework. On the other hand, there are schools of psychology that tend to be very boring and not to deal with the interesting human phenomenon. It's partly because we don't know very much. Psychology is in its infancy. We don't know very much, so a lot of the thinking is metaphorical. Different metaphors accomplish different goals. Eventually, the metaphors will hopefully get more precise, but they will probably be very different from the ones we are using today.

Q: Exactly. That's a good answer.

So from the point that you've graduated—how do you end up in Brookline?

Soldz: In Brookline?

Q: What comes next?

Soldz: Work.

Q: So you're working here?

Soldz: Well, when I graduated—where did I work? Oh, I got a research postdoc [postdoctoral position]. There was an NIMH-funded [National Institute of Mental Health] postdoc program at Harvard Medical School that Elliott [G.] Mishler ran, and picked a couple of people a year. Basically, you had to be affiliated with some lab at the medical school. It wasn't clear. My interest at that point was psychotherapy research. That was a little disappointing to Elliott, whose interests went beyond the clinical. He helped me find someone to work with, actually, because I tried some people and he wasn't happy. He didn't think the people who were agreeing to work with me were good enough researchers. He thought it would be a waste. I eventually ended up with Si [Simon] Budman, who at that point was at the Harvard Community Health Plan and was studying brief therapy, which at that point was rather irritating to me as I was primarily interested in long-term psychoanalytic treatment at the time. But it was an opportunity to do psychotherapy research and also work on personality disorders and a number of things.

So there was the two-year postdoc, and then we had money on some of the grants that we had gotten for a few more years, for at least part-time. Eventually, NIMH changed their funding priorities so that kind of work became un-fundable. Meanwhile, I had gotten involved in doing program evaluation, sort of by accident. A friend from grad school had called me up one Sunday and asked me to do him a favor. He said he was supposed to write an evaluation plan for a grant and it had to be due Wednesday. His mother-in-law had just died and he had to leave town, would I do it?

I said, "Well, I guess I will, but what is an evaluation? I've never heard of it."

He said, "It's just like research only not quite as rigorous."

So I said, "Well, I can do that." [Laughs]

So I went in on Monday and met with these people who were operators and politically connected, but they didn't know anything about it. I didn't know it, so I developed a plan that made the most sense to me. But I had no idea what the norms were. Obviously, in a day, I wasn't going to learn much about it. The boss didn't like how much I was charging—which wasn't very much compared to how much he charged, but I didn't know that then. So he basically made me a deal. He would either pay it and not use me again or he'd pay me less than it and then I could be written into the grant if they got it. So I said okay. They didn't get it the first time, but they resubmitted and did get it a year or two later. They called up and said, "Do you still want to be an evaluator?" So I was working for them part-time for, I think it must have been five years because

it was a five-year grant. Then we got a four-year grant the next year and a three-year grant the next year. So we had three grants, but they all came due the same day. We wrote a bunch of new ones but we didn't get any others. They kept me on for a while but it was no fun because the only real goal was to bring in money.

Then I was recruited to this nonprofit called Health and Addictions Research that did a lot of research and evaluation work for the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and other parts of the Department of Public Health. One of my staff had gone to work for them, so he said, "Well, we're looking for a director of research." I said, "No, but I'll go meet with the director and see if there's any consulting opportunities." So I did. She asked me to consider the director of research, and I got talked into it. They promised that I wouldn't have to write tons of grants. Then the first day, after we agreed and hired, she said, "I need you to get in right away and start writing grants so we can stay alive."

Q: Of course.

Soldz: So I worked on twenty-three grants that year.

Anyway, I did that for a few years. Again, I don't do very well with those kinds of institutions. We had a coup d'état. One of the senior administrators kind of deposed the director and took over, and she used me to do it. Then she decided to replace me with more loyal staff. So I was deposed as director of research but they wanted to keep me on because they needed me for the research skills. But eventually I got another job. Then after a few more years I came here, where

I'm half time because the place can only afford that. I'm the only faculty member actually on salary here. There are a few people who are administrators, then the faculty teach on a per-course basis. I've been here now for ten years, and I mainly teach Research Methods. That's one of my strengths. They don't have anyone else who has the strength in that, so occasionally I get to teach more substantive courses. This fall I can teach Narrative Analysis, which I've taught a few times. At least half of it I do on the role of narrative in people's lives. The other half is on research methods and how to handle life narratives. At least it's a little not-pure research methods.

Q: I'd love to see your syllabus.

Soldz: Okay.

Q: So most of your life you've lived in this area.

Soldz: Yes. Since 1968.

Q: So are you married?

Soldz: Yes. I married the sister of a friend of mine since 1968, Stephen Shalom, whom I got to know when I went to MIT—he was a few years ahead of me—who is an old radical. I knew him and his wife, and I heard about his sister over the years but never met her. Then at his fortieth birthday surprise party, Evelyn, his wife, tried to fix Vivienne up with someone else and Vivienne wasn't buying. She said, "Well, Mark was okay, but Stephen looked nice and cute," so

they said, "Call him up." Their kids, who were teenagers then, really got a kick out of that whole story.

Q: And you have a son?

Soldz: I have a son, Isaac, who is now eighteen. His last day of high school is tomorrow.

Q: It's a big transition.

Soldz: A big transition, yes. He used to talk about how, "My dad's hobby is torture." He used to ask me, "What are the good torture techniques?" when he was younger. But this year he got kudos in his foreign policy class when his teacher discovered his dad was involved in this issue.

She said, "What does your dad think of Bradley [E.] Manning?"

He said, "Oh, he's writing something for the trial."

And she said, "Oh, my God."

Originally, it was going to be a brief—although the attorney is making a case that Manning suffered illegal, pretrial punishment when he was subjected to solitary confinement for six months. We were originally going to brief on it, but the judge seems to believe the rules forbid

her from accepting briefs. So instead the lawyer wants a statement that he can introduce as an appendix to a motion as a way of getting it in.

Q: I can't wait to hear more about that case, but to just ask you how you got into the subjects of torture—were you dealing with those before the post-9/11 period?

Soldz: Not explicitly. I was a radical going back to probably around age ten.

Q: You didn't tell me that story. What happened at age ten?

Soldz: Well, for various reasons I was always attracted to the underdog. I have an older brother, so there's that possible dynamic. I certainly was picked on a lot at school. I don't know what role that plays. It's very hard to piece together. But somewhere around fifth grade, I remember getting a book out of the library on famous naturalists. John Muir was interesting and [John James] Audubon was interesting, but Henry [D.] Thoreau—now that was something different. So he became my hero. Then over the next few years I read a lot about the civil rights movement and Mississippi Summer—the people who went South in 1964—and Dave [David T.] Dellinger's *Seeds of Liberation*. I know by 1965 or 1966 I was against the Vietnam War, but I didn't know anyone else who was.

Q: Interesting.

Soldz: I saw the analogy between that and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. I just couldn't understand how the Soviet invasion of Hungary was bad and why the U.S. invasion of Vietnam was acceptable. The interesting thing was, a couple of years later I discovered that my parents were against the war, but they kept it quiet. My parents are not very brave in that way.

This would have been seventh or eighth grade. I spent all year trying to force a debate on Vietnam in school, and right at the end of the year the teacher finally said, "Okay. Everyone gets one minute or two minutes."

Going around, everyone said, "I support the war because I support the war."

When they got to me, "I oppose the war because—."

"He's Communist!"

Q: That must have been kind of isolating.

Soldz: Oh, I was always isolated. So it was not that, per se. The next year the same kid who said "Communist" was running around the schoolyard saying, "You killed our Lord. You killed our Lord." I think it was ten or fifteen years later I figured out what he was referring to. I had no clue what that was about. I'm Jewish, if you haven't figured it out. But I had no idea.

Q: You just thought he was psychotic.

Soldz: I just didn't know what he was talking about. Then I got in trouble with peers, befriending a Cuban refugee kid. I didn't know you weren't supposed to do it. I have to say, I think, ultimately, I kind of pulled away from the kid, as far as I can remember, probably, subtly, because of it. I always felt guilty about that.

Anyway, as I said, when I went to MIT my goal was to find a radical group to join, and I found MIT Resistance. So I was involved in the anti-war movement in 1968 and later joined a small, left-wing—I hate to even call it a group. About ten of us put out a magazine called *Root and Branch*.

Q: I know that.

Soldz: You know *Root and Branch*? How do you know *Root and Branch*? You know Paul Mattick, Jr.?

Q: I don't remember how I know it.

Soldz: I'm still kind of proud of it. It was a Marxist magazine—journal—but unlike all the others it was written in English—

Q: That's what I remember about it.

Soldz: —not in jargonese, and not in that horrible neo-Stalinist/Leninist—. Well, we were anti-Leninist—libertarian, socialist, or council communist, or sympathetic to anarchism. But I was always proud of it. Our comrade in France wrote a review in which he said, "I would say that *Root and Branch* was the best magazine of its kind in the world, if it wasn't the only magazine of its kind in the world. I've never seen anything else like it."

Q: It was amazing, yes.

Soldz: So I was involved in that I think until we moved to Roslindale, a neighborhood of Boston. Well, Paul Mattick, Jr. was sort of the center of it. He had moved to New York, so the group wasn't meeting very often. I know when I moved to Roslindale, basically no one from Cambridge—one friend from Cambridge came out once, got lost, and never came again. I kept in touch for a number of years, going visiting, but I kind of got tired when I had a young kid, and she was never visiting. Gradually, we drifted apart.

So I'd been involved in that. We had a lot of fun arguments and debates. We were an irreverent group. That would have been to the nineties. I guess I really was really not active at all for the next ten years. Then came the lead-up to the Iraq War, and I just couldn't believe it was happening again, that the whole lesson of Vietnam—that we were just launching into this. Going back, it was bad enough at the time of the first [Persian] Gulf War. It felt like at the end of the Cold War the world had a chance to take a different path, and just instantly they were determined to return to the path of war and domination. The first Gulf War felt like a world historic disaster and immediately surrendered any possibility that a new way of doing things could be constructed

with the end of the Cold War. It was the first George [H.W.] Bush's new world order. Then comes the Iraq War. It was just unbelievable.

It wasn't until somewhere in 2002 when the Iraq War started that it really got to me. After 9/11, I was against the invasion of Afghanistan but I knew it was inevitable. I just wasn't motivated to go out and join the twenty people protesting it. In retrospect, I'm very proud of them, but it just felt like there wasn't any audience who was going to hear it. But the Iraq War—then I became very involved. There was that huge demonstration in New York City, which for me was big because I don't like going to these out-of-town demonstrations.

Q: The one in February.

Soldz: Yes, the one in February. The cold one.

Q: It *was* cold that day.

Soldz: We left Isaac with our in-laws and went down. Vivienne came with me.

So I started on a few things. First, I had been wanting for a few years to learn how to code HTML [hypertext markup language]. It's just one of these skills one should have, but I'd never gotten around to it. We'd just gotten cable TV because Isaac was pestering and Vivienne wanted it, but I did not. So we got high-speed internet and it came with a web thing. So that was an okay excuse. I had just started playing with it, and then I decided to construct an anti-war website—

The Iraq Occupation and Resistance Report, I called it—as a way of teaching myself. It's like you need a task to do in order to actually learn this stuff. Then came the night of the war starting. Vivienne turns on CNN [Cable News Network], and I could not stand the idea of watching what's-his-name. I can't remember—the correspondent going with—.

Q: I didn't have TV during that time.

Soldz: So I ran up to the computer and started furiously posting articles online. It was like, "I can do something. At least I feel like I'm active, rather than just sitting there watching shock-and-awe." Meanwhile, at the school I started something on psychoanalysts. I've taken it down. I used to have a poster up—*Psychoanalysts for Peace and Justice*. A little thing that, somewhat to my surprise. the school allowed to meet here. The school was not traditional. It's actually changed over the years some, under my influence. They'd never been that sympathetic to activist stuff. But they felt, "Well, he's one of the family, but we don't really agree with his activism." But what I was shocked by was how a lot of the faculty became involved, briefly.

So they let me hold meetings, which took a little bit of debate as to whether it would be okay. We held a few meetings and we had twenty or thirty people, including maybe five or six faculty, and a number of students. We just would discuss what was happening. Actually, about twenty people, including members of the faculty, went to demonstrations for the first month or so of the war. Then it was just me again. It's like, "Well, I can't read that news anymore." So I was furiously involved. I started many websites through the *Psychoanalysts for Peace and Justice* website, but the Iraq one was the main one. I updated it many times a day. It was quite a lesson

in history unfolding. I read almost everything in English on the war for a few years. To see the lies unfolding in such detail was really—I knew that governments lie, but I came to the conclusion that governments never tell the truth if they can avoid it. Just the massiveness of how almost everything uttered by a government spokesperson was false. How, over and over again, this would be corrected days, weeks, or months later, and how the press didn't care. They always reported the next lie, and to see this in such detail—it was very consuming, as one might imagine. My psychology research took a back seat.

But, as I said, my choice had been between psychology and history. Partly, it's allowed me to do a bit of history. When Abu Ghraib hit the weekend after, I wrote an article. I guess it was the second piece of mine that got some serious attention. I had written an earlier piece on Iraq—"What Went Wrong?"—that was quoted by *Asia Times* online in a paragraph where they say, "President [William J.] Clinton doesn't get it, but psychoanalyst Stephen Soldz in Boston gets it." They quoted my concluding sentence or paragraph, which had been something like, "Imagine you're an Iraqi and these things have happened to you. What would you do?" That one was quoted all over the blogosphere. It was my first experience with that. It was actually a talk to my local anti-war group, all fifteen people.

Anyway, Abu Ghraib was the second one. Having followed the war so closely, I knew that something was going on at Abu Ghraib. I didn't know what, but there were reports. The Iraqi blogger Riverbend had published a piece about a woman who was released from Abu Ghraib, who was clearly emotionally devastated, and who said, "I'm one of the lucky ones." I quoted this, and, again, I concluded that article by saying, "If I, an ordinary U.S. citizen, knew something was

going on there, surely our leaders knew." Again, this got a fair amount of attention. I got my first radio interview—which was a disaster—on Tom Hartman's show.

Q: Why was it a disaster?

Soldz: I had never listened to the show. I listened once beforehand, and I think he interviewed Bernie [Bernard] Sanders, and it was a very low-key thing. I was not prepared for the talk-radio style, throwing the questions, when he was not interested in allowing me any time to answer. I was just totally unskilled in how to formulate quick answers. I've learned a lot since then. I can do it now. But that's a skill. He's never had me back.

Q: His loss.

Soldz: You learn by fire.

Q: Absolutely.

Soldz: So that was the beginning. But I wasn't really identifying torture as a distinct issue. Then in June 2005 was the APA's PENS [Psychological Ethics and National Security] report. As far as I can remember—we all know memory is fallible. Historians and psychologists both know this. It's hard to remember, but I don't think I followed closely. I just assumed the APA was doing its old bowing down to the military, so it wasn't actually that surprising in a certain kind of way. There was a group, Psychoanalysts for Social Responsibility, which is Division 39 of the APA.

That's the division—the psychoanalysis Section IX—of social responsibility. I was a member on the list. I was one of two who were the radicals—"Oh, the APA has been in bed with the military for a long time"—and no one was interested. I had lost the taste to be this radical gadfly that no one pays attention to, so I had shut up on the issue.

Then June of 2006 was really the crucial moment when the *New York Times* published Neil [A.] Lewis's piece ["Military Alters the Makeup of Interrogation Advisers," *New York Times*, June 7, 2006]. I'm not sure if it was with the Army Surgeon General [Kevin C.] Kiley or if it was with [William] Winkenwerder [Jr.] of the Defense Department, [assistant secretary of defense for health affairs in the U.S. Department of Defense, October 31, 2001-April, 2007] [Note from MMC: it was Winkenwerder]. He said that the military now preferred psychologists to psychiatrists for the BSCTs [Behavioral Science Consultation Teams] because of the respective ethical positions of their professional associations. The psychiatrists had said that their members should not be members of BSCT teams.

This galvanized people in Section IX. They were very upset, so they said, "The APA's board is meeting this weekend. Let's write Gerry [Gerald P.] Koocher, the president." So we wrote emails, and what was striking was the viciousness of the response that we got back. Gerry Koocher's one email to me, which is essentially what he sent to most people, began with, "You're dead wrong!" In the case of one of the members who asked him to "Respectfully reconsider," he said, "After hell freezes over." Then people started to say, "You know, Stephen and Gary must be right. There's something other than a policy disagreement here. This is fishy. Something's not right." I was in shock—not at the response, particularly, but that someone who

could become president would not have the political skill to say, "Oh, we're so glad to hear your opinion." It was the most helpful thing to get a movement started that ever happened. It just enraged people who weren't prone to be enraged or mobilized about it particularly.

So that was the beginning. I immediately wrote a petition, I put it online, and I told the people in Section IX, "Oh, we were going to have Steven Reisner to do that, but you beat us to it."

Q: Did you know Steven at that time?

Soldz: No, just from the list. I'd seen his name a couple of times. So I said, "Well, what I can do that no one else here can do is write." I'd been writing blog pieces for left-wing sources, initially. *Z-Net*—where my brother-in-law was an editor so he could consider my pieces, though he didn't always accept them. We had a deal. He'd feel free to reject and he's done it many times—including this week—if he doesn't think they're appropriate or whatever.

Q: Sure. That's a fair relationship.

Soldz: That's what you want. He's also a great editor. I've learned a lot about writing from him. I said, "I can write." So I started writing an article. I wrote it and I sent it to Steven Reisner for comment, who suggested totally reorganizing it. I kind of lost energy so I didn't get it done. Then I went off to Australia. I was a visiting professor there that summer at the University of Wollongong. It's about an hour south of Sydney. The APA convention was coming up in August

and I said, "If I don't get this out by the convention, it's wasted." So I sat down and got myself to rewrite it. I hate rewriting.

Q: I do too.

A: I write pretty good first drafts, much better than most people's first drafts, but I don't like rewriting and reworking.

I sent it out and I got into *Counterpunch*, in addition to *Z-Net*. Then I started getting phone calls from a couple of reporters. I think a *Newsweek* reporter. I don't remember. But most importantly, someone named Nathaniel [Natty] Raymond of Physicians for Human Rights [PHR]. I didn't know it but Natty, as we know him, was trying to put together a group of psychologists to become active on this. Natty and I talked for a few hours. I told him that I had a theory about why the APA was doing it, which no one else had thought of. Initially he said, "No, that's not it." But as we talked, he said, "You know, that's worth looking into. I'm going to get a reporter on it." The theory––which, in retrospect, was a bit naïve about how things worked, but I think not totally wrong. The APA's biggest legislative priority—policy priority—in the last twenty years has been what's called prescription drug privileges. They want psychologists to be able to prescribe drugs, to compete with psychiatrists. The biggest single thing they had going for them was that the military sponsored the PDP––Psychopharmacology Demonstration Program––in the early nineties, in which ten military psychologists were trained to prescribe medications. Then there were several evaluations. The military did two evaluations that concluded that this was safe but it was not cost-effective. So the APA sponsored their own evaluation and lo and behold,

decided it was cost effective. Not only that, they then had these ten military psychologists to go testify to state legislators, in uniform, from then on.

So that was really the thing that made it a real movement—the fact that they could get the imprimatur of the military behind it. I was wondering if PENS was a payback to the military for support on PDP. The reason I say "in retrospect I think it was a bit naïve" is that I don't think things probably work one-on-one in terms of payback. But it started us thinking in a different way. I think everyone had been thinking only about policy in very broad terms and I think it started us thinking much more carefully about what is the nature of the ties between the APA and the military? So Natty started to try to get a reporter active, to look into this, and it was harder than one might suspect. I know he talked to Jane [M.] Mayer at *The New Yorker*. Jane was busy working on her book, which became *The Dark Side*, and didn't have the time for this. Eventually he got Katherine Eban, who, unfortunately, knew nothing about national security. She had studied the pharmacology industry. I think that was a bit of a problem because I think at some level she was snookered by National Security—by some of the people.

So Katherine had started working on that. Then Natty had gotten together—Jean Maria Arrigo had been a member of the PENS task force, and unbeknownst to them had downloaded the PENS listserv. It was unknown that she had downloaded it. She had archived it in an archive at Stanford University, which she had notified them of, which enraged them, because they had tried to keep everything about PENS secret. They had refused to give any documents to the APA archive, according to the APA archivist. They wouldn't give him anything, not even drafts of the PENS report, which in itself shows that they knew they were doing something illicit.

So she showed a copy of this listserv to Steven Reisner and Nathaniel Raymond, then they took it to Katherine Eban. They showed it to Katherine Eban. I have to say, every time I read it I have no doubt that it shows that there was collusion between the military and APA, and the reporters don't get it. Katherine Eban just never got it. Now I suspect she never read it carefully, for one thing. It's one hundred eighty pages, and that's with Jean Maria's editing—editing in the sense of removing the redundant parts of emails. I don't know if it was Jean Maria or Steven who did that. I don't mean editing and actually changing the text. You have to read a little bit beneath the text. These were not idiots. They didn't say, "Aha! Let's manipulate everything." But you have to keep in mind who these people are. Six of them are from the military intelligence establishment. Four of them were active duty. The fifth one was active with the Navy Criminal Investigative Service, and the sixth one was a paid consultant. Five of them—the phrase we've come up with over the years, trying to be very careful—have "served in chains of command that had been accused of abuses." It's the people who had been at Abu Ghraib, and been at Guantánamo, and been at Bagram [Theater Internment Facility]. They had been at ground zero of the torture program and one of them had been at the black sites. These were the people who knew.

Q: More than you knew at the time, probably.

Soldz: More than we knew at the time, though it was known that five of them had served in chains of command that were accused of abuses at the time. Though the details of what had occurred there we didn't know. The timings were different. But that was known. One of them, Michael Gelles, had been accused of detainee abuse in the APA for allegedly mistreating a U.S.

serviceman and an ethics complaint had been filed by an attorney against him. So this was known to them—to APA—and the people who appointed him. Also, Michael Gelles had a 2003 article published in a major journal—so they could not have not known it—in which he argued that national security psychologists and psychiatrists should not be subject to ethics codes because the professional association didn't understand what they needed to do. This is the guy you point to, to decide if this stuff is ethical?

So you read this thing, and you realize that these are the people who are at ground zero and there's not one mention of any abuses. Any reasonable discussion would start from the point of what happened. What did psychologists do? How could you possibly begin a discussion of the ethics of this without looking at what's alleged and what people were supposed to have done?

Q: The erasure of history.

Soldz: I can't understand how one could read it and not understand that this was a put-up job. That you have five or six people—at least five—who knew the details of what had happened and there's no discussion of it. Now you could say it's classified. Well, that may be. But if these people can't talk about what they know, then what the fuck are they doing on the task force? Of course, they should never have been on the task force. The APA says their expertise was needed. Fine. They should have been witnesses. But you don't have the people directly involved making the policy. If you need their expertise, that's fine. You bring them in. You use their expertise. But you don't have them make the policies, especially when they're on the payroll. The idea that people on the Defense Department payroll could possibly come up with a policy that didn't

support DOD [Department of Defense] administration policy, without destroying their careers, is ridiculous. It's equivalent to appointing the tobacco company physicians to formulate the ethics policy on tobacco use.

Q: I just have a really simple question here that I've been wrestling with. I've read the bullet-point code of ethics for the APA, but I'm interested in how did it become so weak? Was it historically weak? Or are there any underlining factors that would allow even these appointments to be made to an ethics committee? Or was this just the whim of this president? How do you see—?

Soldz: Well, this was a presidential task force. First, the history of psychology in this country is totally intertwined with the military and the intelligence establishment. The psychologists performed many different services in World War I and World War II. It's not by accident that the first professional license in the state was in 1946—payback for World War II services. So those relations bode. The other thing is that psychology has never had a real ethical foundation.

Q: That's what I was asking.

Soldz: Unlike medicine, for all the problems that there are in medicine. there is an ethical foundation that goes back thousands of years that at least many physicians absorb. Not all. Obviously, we know there are major problems with the intertwining with the drug companies. But there is at least this do-no-harm ethic and this commitment to the welfare of the patient. It's taught so that at least a real percentage of physicians absorb it. This has been true in the military

too. There are many cases of military physicians who take risks with their careers and even disobey orders to follow their ethics. Like the ethics say that patients are to be treated in the order of need, not to treat Americans before prisoners of war. Now it doesn't mean it always happens. I don't even know how often it happens, but I do know that military physicians have refused direct orders to treat American soldiers first and say that that's not ethical. You know you risk professional suicide and possible court martial when you do that, but they also know that the medical chain of command supports them and they won't be at least totally let out to dry if they do that. Psychology just has never had that.

I'm a clinical psychologist, and we had ethics training. Ethics training was never anything other than risk-management. Nothing else. We had a course in grad school by a radical African psychologist. I don't remember what the title was, but it was sort of on human rights. But that was just because he was on the faculty there. I'm sure when he left the course was not kept. Other than that, there has been nothing. It's all risk-management. If you do this, you'll be safe. The board won't go after you. There was never any discussion about, first of all, first principles. I never even thought of it. It's just never been discussed, at least in my presence. Any thought of how you would deal with conflicting loyalties—I've never had any discussion of that except, again, under risk-management—of how to do things. The most important thing in most ethic advice is documenting things so that you're safe.

So you document that you did the suicide assessment. That's what's taught as ethics. If you don't know what to do, you go talk to someone from your state ethics board and document that you did that, so you're safe. It was all that. And when I talk to other people I hear the same thing, that

there's just no—so the ethics code, parts of it, sounds really nice. But I don't feel that it's inculcated in the profession in any deep way.

Q: That's what I was trying to get to.

Soldz: The APA is a totally corrupt institution. Its internal functioning is beyond belief. Terrible. And it's just accepted. Partly, I think, psychologists—social service workers are not the world's best at standing up and taking principled stands anyway, for various reasons. Probably mental health is a bit worse. We tend to just like to do our jobs, treat our patients, and kind of just ignore this stuff. And we like to get along with others, which makes a principled stand difficult. So I think there is just not a great tradition of standing up for principle at all. I think that happens within APA, too. People just accept the corruption that goes on.

Then we have the fact that the ethics code was rewritten in 2001 and 2002. Now the process was underway before 9/11. One of the most problematic elements of the code, the Nuremburg defense, was allegedly in the works before 9/11, supposedly for innocuous reasons. I personally don't believe it. My theory, which I have no direct evidence of, is that it's a result of what happened with Michael Gelles and the [Daniel] King case, that when that ethics complaint was filed, they said, "We've got to do something to get these national security folks out and we've got to make it look innocent," so they made up an excuse. They rewrote it to say, in the case of conflicts between law and the ethics code that psychologists can follow, they make known their loyalty to the ethics code, but then they can follow the law or regulation. They said this is about court orders to reveal records. But if that's what it was about, as Ken Pope—who was former

chair of the ethics committee—has said, you would then write a clause. There is actually a clause about releasing medical records. They didn't need a separate clause. But if that was the issue, then you would write that. You wouldn't write this over-arching—and, also, as Ken points out, it doesn't matter, the origin of it. I think the origin was national security, despite what they claim, but even if I'm wrong, they still continued with it after 9/11 when it became clear it had other meanings.

The other clause, 8.05, which basically says that psychologists can dispense with the requirement for informed consent for research if the research is likely to cause harm, or pain, or suffering, or where otherwise consistent with law or institutional regulation. It basically throws out the Nuremburg code.

Q: So this was what was rewritten in 2001?

Soldz: Yes. As far as we can tell, that was introduced into the ethics code in mid-November of 2001, the first clause was introduced. Now the reports are that, already, by that point, there were the beginnings of a special access plan at Guantánamo on research on deception detection on the detainees. The reports are that Senator [Daniel K.] Inouye and his Chief of Staff Patrick [H.] DeLeon—former APA president/psychologist—had been briefed on this special access plan right around that time. Now my thinking is that something was being thought about probably before 9/11, and there is some evidence of that.

Joe [Joseph D.] Matarazzo —again, psychologist, former APA president, and long-term CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] connected guy—we later learned was on the board of Mitchell Jessen & Associates, a CIA torture firm, and was on the CIA's professional standards committee at the time of 9/11. Well, Bryce [E.] Lefever—one of the members of the PENS task force, a military psychologist—reports that Joe Matarazzo was recruiting SERE [Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape] psychologists for the CIA before 9/11, in the summer of 2001. Now what this was about we don't know.

Q: What do you speculate?

Soldz: Well, the rendition program. It's a speculation. I have a source who was recruited by Matarazzo very soon after 9/11—or was attempted to be recruited—in which Matarazzo said, "You know, psychologists are going to have to do some dirty things now." This guy wasn't very interested and Matarazzo moved on to others. So it looks like there was something up beforehand. As they say, the rendition program is what we know, or something we don't know, that was going on.

Q: It's so upsetting.

Soldz: Yes. So I think one of the little-told parts of it is the research part of the whole torture program—

Q: I'm very interested in that.

Soldz: —which we don't know very much about.

[INTERRUPTION]

I was just saying there is another aspect to this, which is it made it hard for those few of us who had been involved in investigations, as well as the public campaign, is that we always know much more than is publicly available and we always suspect much more than we know. So it's also difficult, when you actually know certain things, how to make statements that aren't factually false while sounding reasonable based on the current public record. It's tough. I think I talked some about Katherine Eban. First, one of Natty's weaknesses—like many charismatic go-getter types, he's so optimistic. Something's always going to happen immediately. So Katherine Eban's article came out ["Rorschach and Awe," July 17, 2007, *Vanity Fair*]. Then Natty is quite irritated if you're disappointed or even point out that it didn't come out when you promised it would or if it doesn't say what he said it would. He never says it with caution, "I think it might" or something. It's always, "It's going to—."

The PENS listserv, when we finally released it—which is a whole story in itself—and we were having a hell of a time getting reporters to cover it. No one really understood it, unfortunately, which was totally disappointing because we always assumed that they would get it—so the Associated Press reporter did actually get it, but she couldn't get her editor [to publish it]. He kept on saying, "Nothing new." So we spent a good part of a day on emails, Natty and I. I forget her name. She was their top national security correspondent at the time. We were testing

different angles. Then she said, "Well, let me try it with my editor." Nope. Won't buy it. A couple days later Natty calls me up and says, "They're releasing the story in an hour." So I called a couple of contacts and said, "Be ready, the story—." It never came out, and Natty never said a word about it not coming out. [Laughs] It was just like the message was, "Don't mention it." So it was really tough.

So the Eban article. We were just starting the business. We had no experience with reporters. We didn't know Natty's style or anything at the time, so we had no defenses. He was getting very frustrated. I didn't realize—I think Steven Reisner did—that Natty was drinking a lot and was very depressed. He kind of hid it from me. I knew he was having some problems, emotional problems, but it wasn't clear what the nature was. Eban clearly moved away from the PENS, but the result was that the article—thanks to Natty really—revealed the Mitchell-Jessen story. In the end, she was not the first reporter to publish the names—that was Mark Benjamin. We learned something about how reporters work. When Benjamin called Reisner—I don't know. They were talking, and he said something about, "Oh, I've got Mitchell Jessen. I know Katherine's working on it and I don't want to rain on her parade." So Steven told Eban and she said, "Ah. Then he's got nothing because he'd publish instantly if he had something." Then a few weeks later Benjamin calls up and says, "I got a second confirmation. I'm publishing at midnight." That's how we learned how the press worked. We were naïve.

Q: Very complicated.

Soldz: Yes. So he got the names but he didn't know the details of what they'd done. So he published the names. Then Eban rushed the article. As Natty told the story, it got cut dramatically by the legal team at *Vanity Fair* because they couldn't vet it all in time. I don't know. All I know is that—because she actually began the article with an attack on us, which I have never seen in any other article. The beginning is how these people, Jean Maria Arrigo and Nathaniel Raymond of PHR, came in and brought her this supposed documentation of nefarious APA stuff, but as she looked into it there was nothing there. However, a different story came out—the Mitchell Jessen story. It was like, "You fucking bitch."

One, she's wrong. She's just wrong.

[SECTION CLOSED]

Okay. Now we can get back to the main story, which doesn't have to be edited.

It's like, why did she have to take that slap that embarrassed us? Doing that to your sources is not a good idea.

Anyway, we were all awaiting the article. It was supposed to be released at midnight, I think it was. I don't know. We were all at our various computers. Then it came out forty-five minutes late. Then we quickly read it, and we were devastated. Natty was furious at us for being disappointed in it—and partly he was right. In the end, the Mitchell Jessen story was, of course, extraordinarily important. But there was nothing we could do directly with that. We had expected

the APA's complicity to be revealed and instead this sort of exonerated them and bought the line, which others have bought, that the PENS task force was composed of people who tried to stop torture—which was at least largely BS. It doesn't make sense with what was going on, if the origin came from the CIA. It is possible that they were trying to temper the worst of things at some point, but there's no real evidence of that.

Michael Gelles, Larry [C.] James, and [R.] Scott Shumate all claim to be anti-torture. Scott Shumate claims that he was distraught at what was done to Abu Zubaydah when he was there and left. It's not clear. Scott Shane in the *New York Times* quoted people as saying, "Some people protest too much," and Gregory Block also quotes Kirk [M.] Hubbard—I think it was Kirk Hubbard—basically saying he was more upset about his unit losing control of the enhanced interrogation program than what the program was doing. So I don't know. But I do know that after he left the government a few years later—because he stayed at the CIA at the counterterrorism center for another year, so he wasn't discussing it. Then he went to the Counterintelligence Field Activity [CIFA] in the Defense Department for a couple of years. But when he left the government he was doing consulting, and I found online that he was consulting at some national security conference, and his bio said that he was "present with many of the high-value detainees." A few days later that disappeared from the web. I've got screen shots, one where it says he consulted with high-value detainees. The next one says that his bio has been removed for national security purposes. The third one is his bio is just gone. There's no sign he's speaking. I've got screen shots of all of these.

Because he clearly wasn't ashamed of it. He bragged about it to make money. So I don't buy his disgust. The same with Larry James. His story just doesn't add up. As I showed, he was at Guantánamo from January through early May of 2003. Not that much is documented going on during that period.

Q: I know.

Soldz: But they wrote the standard operating procedures for Camp Delta, which mandated mandatory four weeks of isolation for all new detainees in order to break them and make them dependent on their interrogator. WikiLeaks released that. That's a whole other—my WikiLeaks sort of—.

Q: We'll get to that eventually.

Soldz: I got that from Julian [P.] Assange. I just got an email. I had never heard of this guy and I got an email. It just said, "Enjoy." It's like, "What is this?" Do I click on this link? Is this spam? Is it going to blow the computer? To be honest, what I did was I went into the computer lab and said, "Well, if it blows, it won't be mine." [Laughter]

Q: That's the advantage of working in an institution. [Laughter]

Soldz: Then it's like, oh my God. This is it. I remember running downstairs and telling someone, "You won't believe what I just got."

But this is a case where several people got it and it was written up, but I think that the main emphasis in reporting was on hiding detainees from the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross]. Other reporters—I don't think they realized the relevance of the isolation business. The SOP [standard operating procedure] was released April 15 of 2003, exactly during James's tenure. He was the chief intelligence psychologist for the Joint Intelligence Task Force—Joint Intelligence Group, I think it is. I can't remember which. Anyway. There is no possible way he could not have known what was happening. He probably helped write it. Now he couldn't have written it because James can't write an English sentence, so he couldn't have actually written it. Though there are parts of the thing that read like James might have written them because all of a sudden, the language didn't make any sense. To our amusement, James became dean of the School of Psychology at Wright State University. The CV [curriculum vitae] he sent them had typos, like twenty typos on the page. It had wrong dates—

Q: It didn't matter.

Soldz: —wrong dates for publications. It listed him as having eight jobs at the same time. It listed all kinds of bizarre things. They gave him the job—partly because he's black. The president came in and basically said, "We're going to have a black dean, and that's it." Partly because Wright State is near Wright [Patterson] Air Force Base and tied to the military. It has a lot of students from there. But I hear he's been an awful, awful dean. He doesn't show up for work. He basically doesn't do anything. But anyway.

Phil [Philip G.] Zimbardo actually sent my article to James. Phil, for some reason he's close with James. I don't get it. James wrote back a vehement denial. He knew nothing about isolation. The only thing he knew about was medical isolation because they came from tropical countries. Also, I had made a mistake on a date. I had thought he went from Guantánamo to Abu Ghraib because of the way his bio was written. I didn't realize he'd gone back to Walter Reed [Army Medical Center] for a year or something. So I wrote to James and apologized for getting the date wrong. Then I framed a long list of questions, which he said he wouldn't respond to because he's dyslexic, but he'd be glad to meet with me when he's at the APA convention when he would be off duty. He was retiring. Which I did not take him up on. Phil wrote me and said, "You're getting everything wrong. You're going to blow everything if you make these mistakes." Then he wasn't very happy with Larry's response to me. It was kind of weird, playing a bit of both sides. He said, "Well, he's going to have to answer these questions someday." But I know Phil Zimbardo wrote the preface to Larry James's fictional book. Fictional is my term for it, not—so-called memoir on Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib. As someone pointed out, none of it is redacted because fiction doesn't have to be redacted.

Q: I'm going to use that line.

Soldz: It doesn't actually come from me. It's being used with regard to why José Rodriguez's memoir has no redactions when he writes about the torture of Abu Zubaydah, etc. Whereas Ali [H.] Soufan—the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agent's book—it's crippled with CIA redactions. So it's being said that the reason is because Soufan is telling the truth, and since Rodriguez's is fiction, he can say anything he wants.

Q: Gosh. Sinister.

Soldz: Actually, he can say what the CIA wants him to say. So that is one thing to look at. If something isn't redacted, it's probably missing a lot.

What was I saying? I lost the narrative thread here so I'm not sure where to go.

Q: You were talking about—okay, so we're back in 2006 and 2007.

Soldz: Okay. The Katherine Eban *Vanity Fair* article, which only appeared online, as a result of their rushing it into print—they were rushing also because they got word that Jane Mayer had the story and was going to publish. She would have had a lot of the story. She probably had a little bit more than Eban did, so Eban had to get it out before Mayer. It turned out to be fairly good, because they were two weeks apart or so. So it was a one-two punch with the story.

Q: This was her piece in *The New Yorker*.

Soldz: Probably—*The Black Sites*.

Q: I forget.

Soldz: The one on Mitchell Jessen. Yes. So she came out in early August of 2007, so Eban must have been July. Maybe Benjamin was late June. It was a real experience seeing how the press works.

Q: So just to ask for a clarification question, they were not members of the APA?

Soldz: Who?

Q: [James E.] Mitchell and [John B.] Jessen.

Soldz: No, they were not. Mitchell and Jessen were not members. Joe Matarazzo, who is on their board, was. Somehow the APA had no interest whatsoever in that a member of their board, a former president, and a person who played major roles in their nonprofit foundation is on the board of a torture foundation. [Laughs]

Q: How do you explain this to a ten-year-old?

Soldz: But it's important on Mitchell Jessen—to keep in mind. I've been trying to hit this over and over again. The level of APA—. Stanley Cohen has a book on social denial, a great book. I don't remember the exact phrase. I quote it in my article. He's talking about people who were downwind from the concentration camps, had smelled it every day, and said, "We had no idea what was going on there." He writes something about the lack of curiosity, and then he writes

something like, "Many organizations are filled with people who lack curiosity." Which is such a beautiful description of the APA.

The APA had a long relationship with Mitchell and Jessen, whether or not they are members.

Q: What was that relationship?

Soldz: Well, from 2002 for several years they had the series of conferences on national security with the FBI and the CIA in which Mitchell and Jessen were present, brought by CIA psychologist Kirk Hubbard. So one of them—I think it was the 2003 that was held by the Rand Corporation, funded by the CIA—was on the science of deception. We have the report written by Susan [E.] Brandon. It discussed enhanced interrogation techniques. It discussed, for example, the use of drugs in interrogation and it discussed how you can overwhelm the senses, which is part of the classic—you know, the loud music, etc. Mitchell and Jessen were there, as was Kirk Hubbard, at several of these conferences. There was a meeting at [Martin P.] Marty Seligman's—former APA president—house, I think it was in January of 2002, at which Mitchell was present.

If this was in the slightest an ethical organization, when Mitchell and Jessen's names were published, they would have been saying, "How did we have these guys at our meeting? What was going on there? Who invited them?" etc. The fact that they have never accounted at all, never shown any curiosity about it, shows that they're hiding something. I can't even imagine—it could have happened but, certainly, if you had [Josef R.] Mengele at your medical conference, you would wonder how did he get there? What did we talk about? Did he say anything?

Q: Well, this is part of the whole zeitgeist that you're in now, the [George W.] Bush zeitgeist, where you wrote about their policies of non-torture torture. Historically speaking, how did the paradigm change with the Bush administration effect? To allow the APA to move to the extent that they—looking back a little?

Soldz: Well, when you look at the Senate Armed Services Committee report on the interrogation program—which we were disappointed in, again—

Q: This was what year? I can look it up.

Soldz: Probably 2008. Natty had been helping them with it and we had expected more on the BSCT program. Instead, [L.] Morgan Banks was quoted approvingly in Carl Evans' press release with his statement against torture. But when you read it carefully, there's something totally missing from that report, which, I have a suspicion, is because of Senator Inouye. Senator Inouye is one of the key figures behind all of this. He's always been a great APA and psychology supporter. His chief of staff, a former APA president, is, according to our sources, the go-to person between APA and the military intelligence establishment—Patrick DeLeon. So my guess is that Inouye got them to take most of this out. But I can't prove that.

In any case, it doesn't add up. BSCTs are just missing many points, except for where it's already mostly public.

Q: Say more of what you mean by that.

Soldz: Well, the case of John Leso. John Leso is clearly in there, although he's not named. I forget how they referred to him, but there's no question of who he is. It's possible he was kept out so it couldn't be used as evidence in the ethics complaints against him. Because even though it's clear, a board could reasonably say, "We can't prove it's Leso." So this may have been one of the compromises to protect him. What's strange is, he was not yet named the top psychiatrist BSCT at the time—oh, God, I'm blocking on his name. So how come the psychiatrist, who probably played a somewhat lesser role and who was more of a whistleblower from what's presented there, is named and Leso is protected? Leso is listed as just a BSCT psychologist or something like that. So that happens. It's at least there. But then the BSCTs disappear. So there's no BSCT. There's nothing on the Larry James business.

But one of the points is, the way the thing was framed and the thing that allowed them to use Banks in that way—which is also part of what you're getting at—is, the report makes a distinction and says that there was a major distinction between so-called physical techniques and psychological techniques. They say that Banks opposed physical techniques but they don't say he opposed psychological techniques—sleep deprivation, sensory deprivation, exploitation of phobias, and sensory overload. Only the physical techniques. Then they do say that when the BSCTs and other Guantánamo staff went to Fort Bragg in September of 2002 for training, that he taught them in both physical and psychological techniques because he was instructed to. So he certainly doesn't sound like any hero.

The point is he was an advocate of psychological torture techniques. Now what's striking about the report is there is no list of the two types of techniques. You read the whole report—this is a fundamental distinction that goes through their report, yet there is no discussion about what falls in one or the other. It can't be missing by accident. It had to be deliberate.

So there's no discussion of sleep deprivation per se. There's no discussion of isolation. Isolation and sleep deprivation are the two most prototypic psychological techniques. They're the essence of all of them. With those two you don't need all the other torture techniques. Isolation and sleep deprivation will do all you need. You can get someone to confess to having murdered their truly, dearly beloved spouse with forty-eight hours of sleep deprivation. It's happened many times.

Q: Again, on the relationship between the government and the psychologists and all this—have you uncovered any direct evidence of pressure that the executive branch was putting on any of these guys—the APA, the military psychologists—to produce so-called evidence?

Soldz: Only rumor. This is one interesting story that's never been told publicly. In—I believe it was March of 2007—I spoke in California at the Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California. They had a forum on torture and I spoke. I think it was two weeks before that Alfred [W.] McCoy, author of *A Question of Torture*, had spoken at the Wright Institute—the psychology graduate school there. At the last minute the Wright Institute felt a need to be balanced and had invited Stephen [H.] Behnke, the APA's ethics director—who was the front man at that point for the APA's pro-interrogation position—to be a discussant of McCoy.

So when I spoke, these two—this is not irrelevant—lovely, young, female graduate students came up to me and said, "We were at Dr. McCoy's talk a couple weeks ago and afterwards we were sitting out on the curb. Dr. Behnke came over and sat with us, and he was saying, 'People don't understand how much pressure we're getting from the White House, and we can't change the policy.'" I went over this. I said, "You're saying this," and they confirmed it. Unfortunately, I was exhausted and I didn't get their emails. I asked them to email me. They never did. So this was one of our—we used to try to spook Behnke, hoping to get some information out of him. A few weeks later I sent Behnke an email. It was entitled something like, "Two lovely graduate students in San Francisco." I briefly recounted the story and said, "Oh, Steve, now I understand what great pressure you've been under. No wonder you pursue this ridiculous policy, with the White House on your back."

Q: What was the response?

Soldz: Fifteen minutes later I got back a somewhat furious, frenzied response, that CC'd [carbon copied] the director of the Wright Institute and someone else there that basically admitted that he had had this delightful conversation with these graduate students—that the White House had not come up! And asking the director of the Wright Institute to try to identify them and basically get them to stop spreading false rumors. A month later, whoever from the Wright Institute wrote and said, "I can't find out who they are, so this is the end of it." I have at least confirmation that he did have that meeting or discussion.

Now what's relevant there is—okay. Here's another time we tried to spook Behnke. This was my first experience of this. These are part of the fun stories—which, I have to say, it shocks the hell out of me that I was able to do this. You have to understand, psychologically, I hate feeling on the spot. My wife and I have this repetitive pattern. She asks me questions and I freeze up, and she gets livid and this and that. But if I talk about what's on—she asks, "How was your day?" and I say what I did today, she doesn't listen. But I hate being on the spot. So I'm amazed at myself that I pulled this off.

So in December of 2006, after I'd written two articles on the APA in *CounterPunch*, which were very hard-hitting, Behnke wrote me and asked to meet with me. He basically said, "Just tell me when and where, and I'll fly up and meet any time." So I got a bit spooked. I'm a bit timid, actually. It's surprising, given my writings. So I brought a colleague, David Sloan-Rossiter. I wanted someone there as a witness, for one thing. I didn't know what was up. I didn't know if I was going to be threatened. If I was going to be tempted—bribed. I didn't know what, so I wanted to make sure there was a witness there so it wouldn't be just a he-said/she-said situation. I also bought a tape recorder—an Olympus—and I was planning on asking him to allow me to record it. But something happened at the beginning—I'll tell you in a minute—which threw me off and I lost the nerve to do it.

So we set up. I think it was the week after Christmas or somewhere right around there in 2006, at a little Italian restaurant in Coolidge Corner here in Brookline—Firenze. It's not there anymore, but I used to like it a lot. It was an eight-table place and I knew that on a week night it would be very private and quiet. So we set this up. Behnke arrived a little late, maybe fifteen or twenty

minutes late. What threw me off was that he started talking about how when he's in Boston—he used to be at Mass [Massachusetts] Mental Health Center some years ago. I had done my internship there. I had been in therapy with June [G.] Wolf, who was chief of psychology there for six years. Then I terminated. Several years later, when I was going for an internship, Mass Mental was one of the top internship sites in Boston. So I wrote June Wolf and basically said, "I'm thinking of applying for an internship. What do you think, if I apply there?" She said, "It doesn't seem to me fair that you should be excluded because you were in therapy with me, but I'll have other people conduct the interview and I'll basically keep out of whether you're accepted or not." So I was interviewed by a couple of people and I was accepted on the in-patient unit, which I didn't want. I wanted the out-patient. I was again devastated and ended up loving it. I was terrified, to be honest, and I ended up really liking it.

Anyway, so I was in her internship program as well, having little contact other than that she had a weekly seminar. But she made sure that I was supervised by others. At the end of the year, we discussed what it had been like for the two of us and what was interesting was that it was much harder for her than for me. She found it really stressful. In fact, there had been a party at her house at the end of the year, and I brought a girlfriend and I kind of introduced her, and June Wolf freaked out and ran away.

Q: Such interesting stories.

Soldz: But what I was, at some level, so impressed by was that she was willing to do it. She could easily have either said no, or killed me privately and not go through this. But the fact that she was willing to do it was—.

Anyway, so Behnke comes in and he says, oh, he was just coming from June's and—I forget her husband's name. He always stays with her when he's in town. I was so thrown by this and I'm suddenly paranoid. What does he know? Does he know that I—? Later, I realized that she probably said I was in the internship. There's nothing confidential about my being in the internship. My having been in therapy with her is something else, although even that I wouldn't argue is strongly confidential because she had to have told some of the staff there to explain the process of application. In any case, he was not there when I was there. He came later. But it threw me enough that by the time I recovered my equanimity, the moment when I should have asked to record was past. I was just too emotionally trying to readjust. I never asked and I've always regretted it.

So we went on and parried. It was a very interesting evening because he was field-testing arguments on me. He was giving me counter-arguments, I would counter them, and there were two or three arguments that I didn't have good counters to.

Q: Such as?

Soldz: Such as the American Psychiatric Association, who had said their members shouldn't be involved in interrogations, had, nonetheless, said that they wouldn't take ethics action against anyone who did participate. That was one. I forget what the other one was.

Q: That's okay.

Soldz: Anyway, what was striking was that both those arguments appeared for the first time from surrogates—from what I believe are surrogates—from people who had been in contact with him within the few weeks beforehand, from two other sources, on listservs—although what he didn't know was I had found out what the facts were on these cases and had counters by then. So I'm one hundred percent convinced he was field-testing arguments. So we parried back and forth. What we had planned with Natty from PHR and also Paul Rocklin, who was then at PHR, who was the solid [one]. Natty tends to come up with schemes. So I insisted on running it by Paul to see if he thought it was okay before actually doing it, and Paul had given it an okay. He was a more sober figure than Natty. So I decided, what the hell?

After a couple of hours of that, as planned, I said, "Okay." What's the phrase? "Let's put our cards on the table. You and I know that the whole story changes when the *Vanity Fair* article comes out." We were still expecting it was going to be about PENS. Behnke kind of blanched. At first he said, "What *Vanity Fair* article?" Which means that I knew he was lying, because I knew that she had actually talked with him in the last few weeks. I said, "You know, the one Katherine Eban is working on." Oh, no. At first he looked down, and then he took a sip of water, and then he took a sip—I can't remember if it was coffee or Coke that he had. I've got notes on

all this because I took them the next day, in great detail, so I wouldn't forget. He took another sip of water and then he said, "What *Vanity Fair* article?" So I knew that he was calculating, trying to figure out how to respond to this.

Q: But wouldn't he know that you knew that he was lying?

Soldz: That's what's interesting. Why did he decide to choose—that's why he was quickly calculating what to do. So I said, "Come on. Let me tell you what we know." I don't remember exactly. Basically, the thing was, "We know that Russ Newman—" who was an observer. Russ Newman was head of the APA practice directorate. His wife, Debra [L.] Dunivin, was a BSCT at Guantánamo. If the whole thing wasn't corrupt from beginning to end, the fact that someone whose wife was a BSCT would even be allowed to have anything to do with it, much less be in the room and have any influence—which he did—on the proceedings. If they had said it was unethical to be there, his wife could have been in trouble. It was beyond belief. Instead, Debra Dunivin went with Morgan Banks and Larry James to the surgeon general of the Army afterwards and revised the BSCT protocols to match PENS. So she used it to advance her career. I mean, the level of corruption in this whole process is simply amazing.

So I said, "We know that Debra Dunivin was a BSCT." That was slightly risky because we only had it because Surgeon General Kiley told Brad Olson, because he felt Brad Olson was on their side. And we didn't have a second source at that point. I can prove she was at Guantánamo. We found a grant of hers where it says she was unable to file a report because she was at Guantánamo. We have other evidence, but we didn't have it yet. I said, "I know you guys were

working with the Defense Department." That's when, in retrospect, I knew something—because he looked up and he said, "Defense Department. I'd like to see your evidence on that." This is where I put it together with the statement about the White House. We now know that the CIA was behind PENS, not the Dcfense Department. So he knew then that I'd missed it—that we had missed it and he was safe.

Q: Wow. What a story.

Soldz: Then David, realizing things were over, tried to distract by asking about a friend's ethics issue or something. He was interested in hearing Behnke talk about it because every word was simply about, "If he does this, he can't be brought up on charges." It was all about risk. Nothing about ethics. Ethics was not mentioned. It was only about risk avoidance, and you saw Behnke's mind work. He's very good at it. But there was nothing about ethics. So that was another one of our famous Behnke ruffles—which never worked, by the way.

[INTERRUPTION]

[END OF SESSION]